

# Autumn Newsletter



March - May 2008.

**Hello again from all of us at Warby St,  
Although hard to believe it is Autumn.  
Over the next few months the weather will cool  
and with the change in season comes a change in  
the problems our animal friends will face.**



## Arthur - itis

As we start to prepare for cooler weather it is a good time to spare a thought for our older canine pets who may suffer exacerbation of their arthritis as the cold bites. In the Autumn you may notice that your dog is slower to get up after it has been resting and is stiff in its gait for a while before it "warms up". Other signs of arthritis can include a reluctance to exercise or an animal that gets tired quickly when exercising. Often they will have trouble getting up stairs or jumping up into the car. Arthritis tends to affect older dogs, usually over 10, but it can affect middle aged dogs too, especially if they have had problems with their limbs in earlier life, such as a broken leg or cruciate ligament tear.

We find that starting treatment for arthritis before the real cold of Winter tends to be more successful than waiting until they are very sore. If you know your dog suffers arthritic pain or you are noticing some of the above symptoms in the next few weeks then it is time to have them checked and get them ready for the Winter. The treatment of arthritis varies depending on the severity and there are several things that you can do at home to make your pet more comfortable. Giving them a warm place to sleep is essential. A soft padded bed in a warm place free from drafts can go a long way to helping them get going in the morning. There are also special foods (eg. Hills j/d) or dietary supplements (eg. Sasha's Blend) that can be beneficial. It is important to remember that arthritis is not a simple problem so attacking it from several different angles is better than one treatment alone.

Arthritis is a degenerative disease that cannot be 'cured' so treatment needs to be modified as the disease worsens. This involves medical management, first in the form of injections that help slow the process and nourish the joints and finally with the use of daily anti-inflammatories that ease the pain.

If your dog is showing signs of slowing down this Autumn then it's probably time for it to be assessed for arthritis before the cold of winter bites.

## EASTER/ANZAC DAY TRADING

We will be **closed** on Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Monday

We will **open** from 9am to midday on Easter Saturday

We will also be **closed** on Anzac Day (Sat 25th April)

The normal emergency service will operate on all public holidays



## MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping is now mandatory for all new registrations in Wangaratta  
Microchipping is only **\$31.50**

# Care for Older Horses in the Winter Months

The winter cold is approaching & there are a few important considerations for horses as they enter their twilight years.

As horses age, they get health problems. Much like humans, they suffer teeth issues, arthritis, poor wound healing, weight loss & a general slowing of metabolic processes within the body.

Identifying horses that need help is the first step. Those to keep an eye on are horses that are showing their age, those that have had previous health problems such as recurring laminitis (founder), colic, respiratory problems, and horses that struggle to maintain a healthy body weight.

There are some things that owners can do to help manage the older horse during the colder times of the year.

1) Shelter: Older horses can benefit greatly from natural shelter, such as non deciduous trees, wind breaks along boundaries & man-made shelters built with consideration of the prevailing winds.

2) Rugs: Horses that are older have slower metabolisms & are less efficient at converting feed into body weight. Providing warm, weather proof rugs can reduce the amount of feed required to maintain weight by up to 25%. It also gives those horses which have stiff & sore backs & joints some added warmth which aids in function of joints. Rugs do however need regular checking & maintenance as they can twist, rip & get wet leading to another set of problems.

3) Dental checks: Older horses can have significant dental disease that greatly contributes to weight loss. An examination of the mouth with careful attention to dental balance can make a big difference to some horses.

4) Feet: Laminitis, long feet, seedy toe & greasy heel can all trouble horses especially in the damp weather. Laminitis in some horses can be easily triggered by eating autumn grass, careful attention & management of these horses can prevent trouble. Overly long feet & poorly trimmed feet can also predispose to cracking & infections. Regular trimming & hoof care can go a long way to reducing problems. Providing areas with good drainage near troughs, shelter areas & feed points also helps.

5) Worming: Is especially important in older groups of horses that need as few physiological stressors as possible.

6) Supplements & Nutrition: Diet & supplements can also help horses struggling with the cold & can help maintain weight. There are many different formulas available for supporting horses with poor teeth & other medical conditions. Adequate calorie requirements must be met & if there are any concerns with your horse's needs, please contact the surgery.

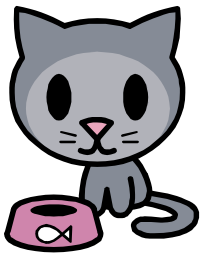
8) Arthritic horses can often benefit from joint supplements & there is a large range available from the clinic. Spinal care & treatment can also make a lot of older horses more comfortable & mobile as well.

## *“King Valley Run”*

A service provided every Tuesday charging TRAVEL fees from Greta, Moyhu or Milawa.

## *“Beechworth & Myrtleford Valley Run”*

A service provided every Thursday charging TRAVEL fees from Markwood, Everton, Beechworth and Myrtleford



# Pyrethrin Poisoning in Cats

## Supermarket Dog Flea Treatments and Cats Don't Mix!



Many of the flea control products for dogs available at the supermarket are based on a natural or synthetic pyrethrin compound. These insecticides block sodium flow in the nerves and lead to repetitive nerve discharges. In fleas this is fatal as it causes spasms and seizures. These dog flea control products are safe to be used on dogs as long as they are used according to the directions. Unfortunately they are not safe to be used on cats. This is another instance where cats cannot just be looked at as small dogs. They have a unique metabolism and dosing them with dog flea preventatives can be fatal.

If a cat is treated with a pyrethrin product it will cause increased salivation, paw flicking, ear twitching, depression and possibly vomiting or diarrhea. Your cat will look lethargic and appear "twitchy". With increased doses or progression of the poisoning the cat will become increasingly lethargic and develop muscle twitches and incoordination. This finally leads to seizures and death may occur within hours of the poisoning.

Cats can be poisoned by either oral or topical flea preventatives such as powders or spot-ons. If the mistake is detected early, vomiting can be induced and poisoning may be avoided. If a topical treatment has been applied it is important to thoroughly wash the cat as their grooming habits will cause a re-exposure if the chemical is left on the fur or skin. It is also important to keep the cat warm as a lower body temperature makes the pyrethrin compound much more potent.

Many of the poisonings are self limiting and never progress past the ear and paw twitching and salivation. However, if the symptoms deteriorate the cat will need to be hospitalised. There is no antidote to the poison, but IV fluids, warmth and control of tremours/seizures with anticonvulsants may be necessary until the effect of the poison has worn off.

The moral to this story is that using dog flea treatments on cats should be entirely avoided. If you do make a mistake then prompt treatment is likely to prevent any poisoning from developing. In general we use and recommend Frontline and Advantage. These are topical flea preventatives that kill and control fleas and their eggs and larvae for a month. They tend to be more effective and safer than the supermarket products.

**Why Not Get Your Pet Desexed Now?!**

The RSPCA is currently subsidising our routine desexing!

**\$25 off male desexing**

**\$30 off female desexing**

Please call the clinic on 5721 7177 to book you pet in!

*Thankyou to the RSPCA for their wonderful support.*

